

# Biden and Sanders Lead the 2020 Field in Iowa, Poll Finds

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**Highlight:** The poll of likely Iowa caucusgoers found the two longtime politicians far ahead of their competition. It also found widespread support for liberal policy ideas.

## Body

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Former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and Senator Bernie Sanders lead a new poll of likely Iowa caucusgoers released this weekend, underscoring how the nomination process for the Democratic Party has, to this early point, been defined by the two figures with the largest national profiles.

The poll, which was conducted by The Des Moines Register and CNN, had Mr. Biden as the top choice for 27 percent of respondents, leading all candidates. Though Mr. Biden's advisers have signaled that he intends to run for president, he has yet to announce his candidacy. Mr. Sanders, who kicked off his campaign recently in New York City, was the top choice for 25 percent of those asked.

Poll numbers have fallen sharply, however, for the other major holdout: former Representative Beto O'Rourke, who lost a Senate bid in Texas in 2018 and could announce his candidacy in the coming weeks. Only 5 percent of likely caucusgoers now call him their first choice for president — down from 11 percent in December.

The Iowa caucuses will be held in early February of 2020.

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The results signal how Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders, two longtime politicians on opposite ends of the party's ideological spectrum, are entering the race with great familiarity to voters. It remains to be seen if that will translate to hardened support, particularly in one of the largest, most wide-open and diverse Democratic primary fields in history.

The next closest figure to Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders, according to the poll, was Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who was among the first to announce her presidential candidacy. Ms. Warren was the top choice for 9 percent of respondents, followed by Senator Kamala Harris of California, who was favored by 7 percent of respondents and had soaring favorability ratings.

Other candidates — including Senators Cory Booker of New Jersey, Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota — have struggled to make an imprint, the poll found.

The poll also asked respondents about their policy priorities, offering a hint of the political leanings of the Democratic electorate as the party wrestles with its ideological core. Progressive ideas such as raising taxes on the wealthiest Americans, the bold climate action known as the Green New Deal, and a "Medicare for all" health care system all enjoyed widespread support among likely caucusgoers.

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This comes even as most voters preferred Mr. Biden, who has billed himself as a moderate opposed to the Democrats' leftward lurch.

PHOTO: Despite not yet entering the 2020 race, former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. leads a new poll of likely Iowa caucusgoers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Nati Harnik/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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